THOUGHTS ON THE PRAYER BOOK

BY

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CANON W. E. DANIELS

Author of

THOSE WERE THE DAYS

SPIRITUAL JOY

Etc.

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PREFACE

These thoughts on the Prayer Book were written by me in 1907, very early in my Ministry.

In view of the Tercentenary 1962 it seems a pity they should remain dead and buried, so I have revised and reprinted them.

Printing is now rather expensive, and, priced at 7s. 6d., the book is sold at a loss, but better this than not sold at all.

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W. E. DANIELS.

THOUGHTS ON THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

1.—ITS ORIGIN

If it were necessary to vindicate the use of forms of prayer in the public worship of God we might do so by showing that such forms were used (a) by the Jewish Church, which had not only fixed forms but a fixed order in both the worship of the Temple and of the Synagogue, consisting of Prayers, Psalms and the reading of Scripture, and in some cases of exhortation preaching or teaching as the case of the Synagogue at Nazareth, where our Lord Himself taught, and at Antioch, where after the reading of the lessons Paul was bidden to speak.

The very first form of common devotion seems to have been what is commonly called Miriam's Song of triumph after the deliverance at the Red Sea.

It is worthy of note that this hymn was sung responsively by the men and women.

There are some precomposed forms of prayer in the Old Testament. I think the most interesting of them all is Numbers vi, 24, " The Lord bless thee and keep thee, The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee his peace."

This was the blessing used in the Temple services and the one Zacharias was unable because of his unbelief to pronounce.

Many of Psalms were written for Liturgical use in the Temple, especially " The Songs of Degrees."

(b) Again we have the example of our Lord Jesus Christ who went to the Temple and took part in its services, who attended the Feasts of Dedication and Passover, who came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it, who was circumcized, and I have no doubt confirmed at the age of

12, according to the Jewish custom, and who finally Himself gave a fixed form of prayer for the use of His disciples.

(c) Moreover, we are quite sure that the Early Church invariably used precomposed forms of prayer. The revised version helps us in its translation of Acts II, 42, when it says: "And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching, and fellowship in the breaking of bread and the prayers." Moreover, we are told, they prayed "with one accord."

That is to say, the prayer was common and of necessity, either precomposed or communicated to all at the time by the Holy Spirit.

When Paul writes to the Corinthians he seems in his 1st Epistle and the 14th chapter and the 26th verse to censure them for departing from these common forms.

"How is it then, brethren, when ye come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. I exhort therefore," says the apostle, "that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men."

I have not the slightest doubt that the Apostles left full instructions with the early churches as to the conduct of public worship and the administration of the Sacraments.

Paul especially enjoins the Corinthians to keep the ordinances. Do not misunderstand me, I do not mean the prayer book is to take the place of all spontaneous or extempore prayer. Everything in its place, but for public services of the Church we have the three-fold authority of the Jewish Church, of the Lord Jesus, Himself, and of the Primitive Christian Church.

The Didache or teaching of the twelve apostles, a book compiled about the year 80, at any rate not later than 100 A.D., contains various prayers, traces of which remain in our services of to-day.

The earliest Services extant are the Liturgies of S. James, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, and S. Mark, used in the Church of Alexandria.

In the former we have traces of our Communion Service. You will recognise, for instance—

Priest—Lift we up our minds and hearts.

People—It is meet and right.

Priest—It is verily meet and right, fitting and due to praise Thee, to hymn Thee, to bless Thee, to worship Thee, to glorify Thee, to give thanks to Thee, who madest all creation, visible and invisible.

Later on it speaks of angels and archangels and closes with the Ter Sanctus.

The words of the Institution in the same Liturgy are:—

"This is My blood of the New Testament which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins, do this in remembrance of Me, for as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the death of the Son of Man and confess His resurrection."

The Christian practice of consecrating certain moments of the day to acts of prayer was inherited from ancient Israel. Devout Jews, from the age of Captivity at least, had been accustomed to pray three times a day, as we know from the life of Daniel.

The first generation of the Church adopted the custom. Peter and John went up into the Temple at the hour of prayer, being the 9th hour. At Joppa Peter went on to the housetop to pray about the 6th hour. The tradition outlived the Separation of the Church from the Synagogue, and was maintained by the Early Church.

This system of worshipping at stated hours seems to have developed. During times of persecution the Christians met especially at night, the Services being called Nocturnes, and it also became customary to have Services on the eve of every Sabbath and Holy Day. These Services on

Saturday evenings were called Vigils, and were no doubt suggested by the frequent calls to watchfulness given to the disciples by our Lord, who had also represented the interval between His first and second advents as a single night during which they needed to watch for the Bridegroom's coming.

To revert to the subject of the Hours of prayer which developed from the Apostolical to what is commonly called the Canonical hours, these services increased to at least seven. It is important that you should remember them. Nocturnes or Mattins soon after midnight; Prime at the 1st hour, 6 o'clock; Tierce at the 3rd hour, 9 o'clock; Sext at 12, Nones at 3, Vespers at 6, and Compline just before retiring to bed.

There are some old verses which I give you for what they are worth, which are supposed to explain the reason why the Church observed the hours:—

At Mattins bound, at Prime reviled,
Condemned to death at Tierce,
Nailed to the Cross at Sext, at Nones
His blessed side they pierce.
They take Him down at Vesper tide,
In grave at Compline lay,
Who thenceforth bids His Church observe
Her sevenfold hours alway.

Various Services were then arranged for these hours, consisting of Prayers and Psalms, Canticles and Responses, and, mark you, a great deal of our morning and evening prayer is derived from these services.

But let me pass to a page of History of our own land that we may quite lay hold of the situation here.

Who was the first to preach Christ in Britain is unknown.

There is no proof of an Apostolic Visit. There is a beautiful mediaeval romance which says "Joseph of Arimathea and 12 others established the Abbey of Glastonbury," but there is again no substantial evidence to back up the tradition. There is, however, certain evidence that Christians crossed the Channel and planted the stan-

dard of the Cross with a real degree of success in the 2nd century, and the first English martyr to lay down his life for Christ was one Alban, who died on the site of what is now the City of S. Albans. These English Christians adapted the Gallican Liturgy with some modifications, and we may call the first English Service Book a Celtic form of the Gallican Liturgy.

The Early Church in Britain seems to have had a struggle for life, and to have reverted to Paganism, especially in the South, though noble souls like Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, and the Christians of the Monastery in Iona, kept the flickering flame alive. From that Monastery, later on, in the latter days of Augustine, came Aidan, the apostle of Northumbria.

Ethelbert, the English King, married Bertha, a Christian, who brought to England from Gaul her own Chaplain, who carried on the services in S. Martin's, Canterbury.

Then, in 596, Augustine and his confreres landed in Kent, bringing with them the Roman Liturgy; there were therefore three Liturgies, the Celtic, the Gallican, and the Roman.

Augustine was eager for uniformity, and inquired why, the Faith being one, the customs of the Churches differed so widely, and asked the Pope's (Gregory) Counsel. He replied: " It is my pleasure that anything you find which is likely to be especially acceptable to Almighty God, whether in the Roman, Gallican, or any other Liturgy, be pressed into the service of the Church in Britain while she is young in the Faith."

But the Roman Monks clung to their own liturgy, and Celtic and Gallican customs died hard, so there sprang up various liturgies, each diocese compiling its own. Some worshipped after the Use of Hereford, some of Bangor, some of York, Lincoln, or Sarum, etc. The most important of these uses was the Use of Sarum (that is, Salisbury). It was compiled by a wise Norman prelate, Osmund, Bishop of Sarum, 1078-1099. It gradually superseded other

uses, and in 1415 was adopted at S. Paul's Cathedral, London, and in 1542, just preceding the compilation of the Prayer Book, the Convocation of Canterbury compelled all the Southern Province to adopt it.

Now the Sarum use was not just one Service-book but a collection of Service-books.

There was first of all (note them carefully):

The Breviary, which was really an abridgement of the Daily Services of the Church, and contained the Services of the Hours.

It also contained Special Services for all Sundays and Saint Days. It was an elaborate book, and sometimes went by the name Portifory, the Book the Priest carried on his travels.

The second great Service-book was:

"The Missal" or "Mass Book." I need hardly say it contained the Service of the Mass. From this book we get most of our Collects (not all), Epistles and Gospels, and part of our Service for Holy Communion, though the reformers were most careful to expunge everything which the then recently printed word of God showed to be false or misleading. The third Book was "The Manual," so named because it was the book the parish priest needed to have continually at hand.

It contained what we call the Occasional Offices, the Services of Baptism, Matrimony, Care of the Sick and Dying, the Services for the Burial of the Dead, and the Churching of Women.

The fourth Book was the Pontifical or Bishop's Book, containing those services which could only be used by a Bishop—Confirmation, Ordination, and, I believe, the Service for the Consecration of Bishops.

The Processional was the next Book in order of importance, and contained special words to be sung in procession on Sundays and Holy days. From the processional Litany our Litany may fairly claim to be descended.

You will remember when Augustine approached Canterbury with his band of Missionaries they did so lifting on high a cross and singing a Litany. The Sarum Processional provides a number of Litanies, a special one for Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, one for funerals, some for bad weather, times of drought, plague, or war.

It was such an occasion that really called forth the first draft of our Litany.

In the year 1543 heavy rains ruined the crops, and a famine was thought to be imminent. A procession was ordered, but the order was not obeyed to the satisfaction of the king, and the king ordered an English version of the Litany to be compiled for future use by Cranmer; it was published in 1544, and, with the exception of various invocations to the Saints and Virgin since taken out, stands to-day in your Prayer Books, one of the most magnificent compilations outside Holy Writ.

The Primers were brief manuals of devotion and elementary instruction meant for laymen. They contained the Creed, Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments, what was called the "Little Office" or "The Hours of Virgin," and other services.

The Ordinale or Pie was a book to instruct the priest how to use his office books. It is represented in the Common Prayer Book by the Calendars at the beginning.

These service books were so full of detail, there were so many changes, so many rules and directions, that Cranmer says: "It was so hard and intricate a matter for the Clergy to turn the book that many times there was more business to find out what should be read than to read it when it was found out."

Sum up the position thus far. We have all these different service books and all these different uses. The Books used in one Diocese were not necessarily the same as those used in another. We have the services of the Hours. It was naturally in the monasteries that the hours found their home. Only those whose lives had been consecrated to

this special type of devotional life could really use them. They were not for the business man or for the peasant, for the politician or the university scholar, who had really no time to sing seven services a day.

It may be sentimental of me, but many a time when I have been wandering through some Cathedral cloisters I have thought of pious, not corrupt, monks in the early morning making their way in their rough garb and shorn heads to sing or say their hours in the Monastery Chapel, dimly lit by candles or oil lamps, and I have felt thankful to God that he permits me to worship Him with the very Psalms they used and some of the very collects they said.

I like to think one of their last duties at night at the service called " Compline " was to sing what we sing in our evening service, " Lord now lettest Thou Thy Servant depart in peace," ere they laid aside their rope girdles, their sandals and hooded garb, to rest upon the plank beds of their cells.

But let us go back to our subject. The revision of the service books which resulted in our prayer book was very thorough and fearless. They translated the Latin into beautiful English. It was a revision and not a substitution of new offices. Nearly all that was of permanent value was retained or carefuly altered, and the prayer book, I am sure, owes its strength and beauty to the service books it has displaced.

There are indeed elements in the present book which are due to the Reformers of the 16th century, most desirable elements, but as a whole the book was a remodelling under new influences which the Reformation called forth of the manifold materials which had been placed at the disposal of the Church by 15 centuries of devotional life.

The fresh light thrown by the printing and circulating of the word of God caused the reformers to fearlessly cut out all they thought to be superstitious or wrong, and in considering the Protestantism of the prayer book, we shall see what Cranmer and his colleagues did.

Remember in the first prayer book your morning prayer commenced with the Lord's Prayer, was followed by the Versicles and responses, then the Venite Psalms, first lesson and Te Deum. They were all in the Sarum mattins. The versicles, etc., are to be found in Psalms li and lxx, and have been used since the sixth century. The Doxology is of great antiquity. Clement of Alexandria in the 2nd century makes reference to it.

The Psalms were sung through once a week in the Services of the Hours, but the Reformers wisely spread them over a whole month.

The actual origin of the Te Deum is a little obscure, though according to some it was extemporized at the Baptism of Augustine, by Augustine and Ambrose, who sang antiphonally.

" We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.

" All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father everlasting."

On the other hand, some ascribe the Te Deum to a Bishop of the South of France in the 5th or 6th century.

The second lesson and Benedictus were also taken from the early morning service, and the Lesser Litany (Kyrie), Creed, and Lord's Prayer were used at prime.

The Preces were most of them, together with the Collect for the day and the Collect for Peace, used at daybreak, A.D. 492, while the Collect for Grace was in the service at Prime. It dates from the time of Gelasias, 492. The rest of our morning service was added afterwards. I shall tell you later.

The evening service followed much the same order as the morning in the first Prayer Book, and was taken from the services for the evening hours.

It was on Whit Sunday, June 9th, 1549, that the Common Prayer Book was first used. It was a new era in the public worship of the English Church, and before the

end of the year, by a Royal Proclamation, all the old service books were re-called with a view to completely abolishing the ancient services.

Thus truth triumphed over error, for there was much that was erroneous in the old books, especially the missal. I believe the publication of the Prayer Book did much to free Great Britain from the power of Rome. May God ever keep our Church from her clutches.

II.—ITS HISTORY

By the History of the Prayer Book we mean its story since it became a book. We have traced its origin, we are now about to see the changes, trials, and vicissitudes it has passed through during 350 years of life.

Several men of renown assisted Cranmer in his great work of compiling the book. Ridley, like his leader, laid down his life during the Marian persecution for those very principles so clearly expressed in their work. Holbech, Bishop of Lincolne; George Day, Bishop of Chichester; Thomas Goodryke, Bishop of Ely; Dr. May, Dean of St. Paul's; Cox, afterwards Bishop of Ely, and Dr. Heynes, Dean of Exeter, all assisted. They state their objects to have been as follows:

(a) The introduction into the services of the Church of a larger portion of Holy Scripture.

(b) The giving to the people a book in the English instead of the Latin tongue, which the majority of people had not been able to understand.

(c) The use of the whole of the Psalms regularly instead of a portion of them.

(d) The simplification of services and rubrics.

(e) To bring all the books required for the services of the Church into one, which was to supersede all other uses and become national.

It was pointed out, almost every diocese had its own use, and that instead of one book there were several required for the different services.

An interesting inventory of the books in use at All Saints', Derby, in the year 1466, is preserved which mentions eight Antiphonaries, four Processionals, two Missals, three Grails, two Manuals, two Ordinals, and others.

Before the days of printing the keeping and renewing of these expensive books was a heavy drain on a poor church. The price of a large sized Bible in the early days of printing was £6 10s. of our money (unbound).

It will be well for us also to remind ourselves of the principles the reformers kept in mind as they set to work on the Prayer Book.

First and foremost they took their Standard of Doctrine from the Bible; next they were Conservative, they did not make alterations for the sake of making them; they retained whatever they could of the old Service Books, taking the pure gold from the dross, the precious from the vile.

Now, the first Prayer Book was a Protestant book, but it was not Protestant enough.

It permitted vestments, prayers for the dead, still recognised the altar in the church, while not compelling yet it did not discourage auricular confession and many customs in Baptism, visiting sick, etc., which were practised in the Roman Church were embodied in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI.

The Book was received with general favour both by Clergy and Laity. Even the Roman Bishop Gardiner was fairly satisfied and said he could use it.

Let us see now in what way this book differed from our Prayer Book of to-day. We have seen that the morning service commenced with the Lord's Prayer and closed with the third collect. There were therefore no sentences, exhortation, confession and absolution at the

beginning, and State prayers at the end of either morning or evening prayer. In the service of Holy Communion, while the service began with the Lord's Prayer and Collect, the commandments were not read. Moreover the prayer for Christ's Church or the Church Militant formed part of the prayer of consecration and it also contained " prayers for the dead."

There was an exhortation, inviting though not compelling auricular confession.

In this Prayer Book after the Nicene Creed came the sermon. The Prayer of Consecration came much earlier in the service, and the General Confession, Absolution, Comfortable Words and Prayer of Humble Access (" We do not presume ") came immediately before the administration itself.

The first Prayer Book contained a rubric permitting a little pure clean water in the chalice before pouring out the wine. It forbade the elevation of the Sacrament, and since people had been in the habit of secreting the bread and carrying it away and worshipping it, the clergyman was ordered to put it into their mouths instead of into their hands.

There were two Communion Services for Christmas and Easter. If the priest administered the Holy Communion to the sick on the same day as it was celebrated in Church, he might reserve it and take it to them, but only on condition that it was taken the same day.

Two prayers, one for rain and the other for fair weather, were included in the collects at the end of the communion office. They are now among our occasional prayers. The service for Baptism was very quaint: First there was a rubric stating that the ancient custom of the Church was to administer Baptism only at Easter and Whitsuntide, and commanding the custom should be followed as nearly as possible. The sponsors and children were to be ready at the Church door before the last Canticle at Mattins or Evensong. Here the child was signed with the sign of the cross, and the clergyman said:

"I command thee, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, that thou come out and depart from the infant," etc.

Salt was placed in the child's mouth, a lighted taper was put into the hand; each little ceremony having an appropriate form of words. Later in the service the minister took the child by the right hand, and, the sponsors and others following to the font, the minister said:

"The Lord vouchsafe to receive you into his Holy Household, and to keep and govern you alway in the same that you may have everlasting life." The child was then dipped three times and afterwards enveloped by the sponsors in a white chrisom with these words: "Take this white vesture for a token of the innocency which by God's grace in this Holy Sacrament of Baptism is given unto thee," etc. After which the child was anointed. As the Day of Pentecost was the chief day when this was done it got the name of Whitsun day from the white chrisoms worn by the newly baptized.

Our service of Holy Matrimony differs very little, except that the man did absolutely and literally endow his wife with his wordly goods, giving her then and there, in the presence of the clergyman, gold and silver and other tokens of spousage.

In the service of the Burial of the Dead there was prayer for the soul of the one departed, and a special form of Communion for use at the Burial Service.

To show there was a very real Protestant feeling in the country just before the issue of the Common Prayer Book Parliament passed a Bill prohibiting the burning of candles at Candlemas, and the use of ashes on Ash Wednesday, and of palms on Palm Sunday. An order was made against images, and there was to be no elevation of the Host. A Bill was also passed allowing the marriage of the clergy in 1547. The Communion in both kinds was restored to the laity.

Chiefly owing to the influence of foreign reformers, refugees in England, of whom Martin Bucer, a German,

Peter Martyr, an Italian, and John a Lasco, a Polish nobleman, were chief, the King was persuaded to have the Prayer Book revised and made still more Protestant.

Who the revisers were we do not know. The chief alterations were: The addition of the Introductory Sentences, Exhortation, Confession and Absolution in Morning and Evening Prayer, the Northward instead of Eastward position at Holy Communion, and the inclusion of the Ten Commandments. The service of Holy Communion was altered, some think for the worse, and left very much as we now have it. Vestments, Exorcism, Chrisom, Anointing of the Sick, Reservation of the Sacrament, Prayers for the Dead, and Communion Service for Funerals were no longer permitted and struck out of the book.

The ornaments of the church were also abolished, and the word table substituted for altar all through the Prayer Book.

This last was doubtless due to the influence of Bishop Ridley, who, in his episcopal visitations, had caused the altars to be substituted by tables placed in the body of the churches. John a Lasco would have gone further and made communicants sit instead of kneel to receive.

The Act of Uniformity, enforcing the use of this Second Liturgy, was not passed until April, 1552, nor was it to come into use until November, and as the good young King died in the meantime, although seven editions of the book were printed, it never really came into force.

On the accession of Queen Mary came great changes. She was a staunch Papist. Four days after her Coronation she opened her first Parliament. Peers and Commoners were called to attend a solemn Mass of the Holy Ghost. With the exception of Taylor, Bishop of Lincoln, and Harley of Hereford, the whole Parliament fell on their knees at the elevation of the host, and participated with an air of devotion in that which, in the last reign, had been declared an abomination.

Throughout the kingdom the Protestant preachers were silenced even before Parliament met. Cranmer and Ridley, who would preach without a royal licence, were sent to the Tower. Latimer resigned his Bishopric that he might go Mission Preaching up and down the country, and was imprisoned for seditious demeanour. Hooper and Coverdale were also confined, and the foreign reformers and their congregations bidden leave the country. The Prayer Book was repealed, destroyed, suppressed. The old Roman Service books were brought out, and the celibacy of the clergy enforced. All married clergymen were deprived of their benefices and Bishops of their Sees.

Mary pulled down all the good work done by Edward VI. The old statutes against heresy were re-enacted, and no less than 288 of our church men and women were brought to the stake and burnt alive for their faith; and, mark you, for this burning of our Reformers the Church of Rome is responsible, the blood is upon her.

My subject is the Prayer Book, so I must not stay to recount how this noble army of martyrs died for the faith. Free pardons were offered if they would recant, but they refused. Rowland Taylor, John Rogers, John Hooper, Robert Ferrar, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, John Philpot, Thomas Cranmer, all clergymen, all churchmen, were among the number.

They were burned for the Principles of the Prayer Book; let me quote the four most noted.

Hooper was asked, "Do you believe the corporal presence in the Sacrament?" Good master Hooper said, "There is none such, neither do I believe any such thing."

He was condemned to die. This is part of Ridley's death warrant: "The said Nicholas Ridley affirms, maintains and stubbornly defends certain opinions in denying the true and natural body and blood of Christ to be in the Sacrament of the Altar—so he was condemned and burned."

The articles against Latimer state: "He has openly affirmed, defended and maintained that the true and natural body of Christ after the consecration of the priest is not present in the Sacrament of the Altar."

Cranmer said: "Christ is not there, neither corporally nor spiritually, in the bread and wine, but in them that worthily partake the bread and wine He is, spiritually and corporally; He is in heaven."

Remember, it was because the Romish Service Books and the Romish Doctrine were brought back and the Prayer Book set aside that all this came upon the church. There is a voice in the blood of the martyrs which cries aloud from Oxford and Smithfield and Gloucester.

Resist Popish Doctrine and resist it, if needs be, to the death, but do not leave your church. Everyone knows that Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley were condemned, not only for their doctrine but for the part they had in compiling the Prayer Book. But this bitter persecution only made England more Protestant, and when Mary died in 1558, though Elizabeth set to work warily, the people knew she favoured the Reformers, who trooped merrily back from the Continent. She ordered the Prayer Book to be revised, really favouring the first Prayer Book herself, but she had appointed such a strongly Puritan Committee of Revision that they took the second Prayer Book as the basis.

The changes made were few, and rather tended towards a more moderate treatment of the Romanists:

(a) The ornaments rubric was inserted.

(b) The suffrage in the Litany "From the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities," to which the people were asked to reply "Good Lord deliver us," was left out.

(c) The words used at the delivery of the elements according to the first and second Prayer Book respectively were combined.

(d) The Rubric at the end of the Communion Service declaring that by kneeling at Holy Communion no adoration was intended was cut out. It has very wisely since been restored.

Elizabeth herself replaced the Crucifix in her own chapel, so, while Protestant, we in these days should have called her a High Churchwoman though not a Romanist.

Under Queen Elizabeth Protestantism really flourished, though the church was torn on one side by the Roman element and on the other by the extreme Reformers, whom we may now call the Puritans.

In order that you may rightly understand the history of the Prayer Book during the Stuarts it will be wise if I say a few words with regard to the Puritans.

The English people became, in the days of Elizabeth and James, a people of one book. When Bishop Bonner first set up six Bibles in St. Paul's many well disposed people resorted there, and it was a great joy to them when someone was able to read aloud to them. Moreover, the amount of Scripture in the public services of the church fostered this love for the Bible. The little Geneva Bible was rapidly circulated and permeated the home life. Phrases from the Bible became common in the conversation of the day. Spenser poured out his warmest love notes in his books in the very words of the Psalmist, and when Cromwell saw the mists break over the hills of Dunbar he hailed the sunburst with the cry of David: "Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered."

As the Bible came more into the life of the nation, the whole nation felt the change. The meanest peasant felt himself enobled as a child of God.

The proudest noble recognised a spiritual equality in the poorest saint, and men of the type of John Milton and John Bunyan ennobled and purified English life.

Puritanism, however, had only commenced and had not reached its height when James I came to the throne, but knowing that he had been brought up a strict Pres-

byterian they naturally looked forward to his accession with great hopefulness that he would make such alterations in the Book of Common Prayer as they desired.

As he came from the north to London they met him and presented a petition, called the Millenary Petition, supposed to have been signed by 1,000 but really only by 800 ministers, asking for various alterations in the Liturgy. There were many minor demands, but the chief were: The doing away with the sign of the Cross in Baptism, kneeling at Holy Communion, Confirmation; the use of the ring in marriage, the wearing of the surplice, the abolition of services on Christmas, Good Friday, Ascension, and other Holy days.

The terms priest and absolution should be struck out of the Prayer Book.

The clergy should be obliged to preach once every Sunday.

Bowing at the name of Jesus and the reading of the Apocryphal lessons should not be permitted. Communion should always be preceded by a careful examination of all those intending to communicate.

James had little sympathy with the Puritans. He said he had seen quite enough of Presbyterianism in Scotland; he liked it not. Nevertheless, he called a conference of Churchmen and Puritans, they were hardly yet nonconformists, which met at Hampton Court in 1604. James really had considerable theological knowledge, and had written several books before his accession, and decided to preside himself at the conference, where he treated the Puritans with scant courtesy. There were not many alterations in the Prayer Book at this time, though several additions.

To the word Absolution was added or Remission of Sins. The prayer for the Royal Family was inserted in our morning and evening prayer; a similar suffrage was put into the Litany. Occasional thanksgivings for rain, fair weather, plenty, peace, victory, and deliverance from plague were added.

The exposition of the Sacraments was added to the Catechism. One of the objections of the Puritans was to the use of the word worship in the marriage service in the phrase "With my body I thee worship," as though it meant adoration, when, of course, it signified honour.

King James turned round sharply to Dr. Reynolds and explained it as "giving honour to the wife."

"If you had a good wife yourself," said the King, "you would think all the honour and worship you could give her well bestowed."

The most important result of this Hampton Court Conference was that James ordered a new translation to be made of the Bible, which resulted in the issue of our authorised version of 1611.

While James did not satisfy the Puritans on the one hand, he certainly did not please the Romanists on the other, for within two years of his accession they endeavoured to destroy him and his Parliament by what is commonly called the Gunpowder Plot.

The Godly Puritans were not at first, as has been seen, opposed to the Prayer Book as a whole; truly they may not have liked it being forced upon them. The book was a Protestant book and they accepted it, although they were perhaps a little narrow in some of their demands. But now there came to England through a departure of one archbishop from the principles of the Reformation and his endeavours to unprotestantize the Church, such a terrible reaction against our Prayer Book that after the struggle between the King and Parliament had reached its climax, it for fifteen years became a forbidden book. The man who did all this harm was William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Communion Table had stood in the middle of the Church. His first act on being appointed Dean of Gloucester was to remove it from the middle of the choir and place it altar-wise at the east end. The change may seem a little thing to us, but to the Protestants of 1616 it was thought to bring back the Papal notion of an altar.

The Bishop of Gloucester refused to enter his own Cathedral and never did again. James somewhat unwillingly consented five years later to Laud becoming Bishop of St. David's, and in 1633 he became Archbishop of Canterbury.

Now what did Laud do? In 1622 he issued an order that no one in his diocese under the degree of Dean should preach on deep subjects like predestination and election. 1633 he revised and republished "The Book of Sports," which advocated games on the Sabbath day.

He forbade the Puritans to migrate to America. He prosecuted men like Prynne and Bastwick for their puritan opinions.

He put high churchmen into all vacant Bishoprics.

Laud and his followers tried to force people to conform.

The attempt to compel uniformity completely failed. Worshippers must be volunteers and not pressed men. An impression spread everywhere that the Bishops were not true protestants at heart and could not be trusted.

People began to hate the liturgy itself when they saw it crammed down men's throats by force and people persecuted if they prayed without it. Episcopacy no doubt was primitive and apostolical and the liturgy was very venerable and beautiful. But little by little Englishmen began to connect Episcopacy with tyranny, the Liturgy with formality, and the Church of England with Popery fines, imprisonment and punishments. Nine-tenths of the English people were puritans. The Parliament forbade Sunday games, the bishops encouraged them and Laud ordered the clergy to read a declaration in favour of Sunday Pastimes from the Pulpit. One Puritan minister obeyed and said "You have heard, good people, the command of man, now hear the command of God," and he proceeded to read the Commandments, and said "obey which you please." As Laud aimed at a more Catholic standard of doctrine in the clergy so he aimed at a nearer approach

to the pomp of Catholicism in public worship. In his own chapel at Lambeth he replaced the stained glass windows, set up the Crucifix, brought out vestments, bowings and genuflections during service became common; he all but restored the altar and mass.

The result of it all was Laud was beheaded as a traitor, an act that to my mind was as wrong on the one hand as the martyrdom of Cranmer on the other. The Civil War broke out, and in 1645 an ordinance was passed forbidding the use of the Prayer Book in any place of public worship throughout England and Wales. It was superseded by what is called the Directory of Public Worship of God throughout the three kingdoms.

Another ordinance prohibited the use of the Prayer Book even in private. All copies were to be given up to be burnt. Severe fines were imposed on those attempting to use them. For the first offence £5, a second £10, a third a year's imprisonment. Every minister not observing the directory was fined £2. It was a crime in a child to read by the bedside one of those beautiful collects which had soothed the griefs of 40 generations of Christians. Clergymen were ejected from their benefices by thousands. Beautiful churches were shamefully defaced, and where Cromwell and his soldiers had not spoiled the windows and chopped and burnt the oak carvings, and done ruthless damage in our Cathedrals, the Puritans set to work and defaced almost all that was beautiful in them, and Parliament was so bigoted that it resolved that all pictures in the Royal Collection which contained representations of the Lord Jesus or the Virgin Mary should be burnt.

Now I know we here have a great deal of sympathy with the Puritans; we love them for the way they honoured God's word and for the magnificent books and sermons they left behind, but we shall, I think, agree that they became intolerant and bigoted and went too far now.

Perhaps you would like to know what the Directory was that superseded our Prayer Book and for 15 years did duty.

It was not a Prayer Book but, as its name implies, a Directory as to how the people were to worship. The chief directions were as follows:—

(1) The minister was to pray for a blessing on the portion to be read.

(2) The Canonical Books were to be read in order.

(3) After singing, the minister was to endeavour to get his hearers' hearts to be rightly affected about their sins.

(4) A long prayer was to be offered before the sermon. 13 pages of the Directory are devoted to directions concerning this prefatory prayer.

(5) Then came the sermon and a prayer of thanksgiving; Communicants were to sit about the Lord's Table. Marriages were not to take place on Sunday.

There was to be no service at all for the burial of the dead. Bodies were to be immediately interred without ceremony.

Festival Days, having no warrant in the word of God, were not to be continued. In Nelson's "Life of Bull," we read:—

"The iniquity of the times would not bear the constant and regular use of the Liturgy."

Mr. Bull, having learnt his Prayer Book by heart, used it extemporaneously. While he was minister of St. George's he was asked to take a baptism: to baptise, in fact, the child of a dissenter. He used the prapers of the Prayer Book Service for Baptism. After he had concluded the ceremony the father offered many grateful thanks, intimating with how much greater edification they prayed who entirely depended on the Spirit of God than those who used premeditated forms, and if he hadn't used that badge of Popery, the sign of the Cross, no one could have objected to his excellent prayers, upon which Mr. Bull produced a copy of the forbidden book from his pocket and pointed out every prayer he had used as having come from our Baptismal office.

At length Cromwell died, and the people of the country invited Charles II to occupy the throne. With regard to church matters, a writer of the times says: " The generality of the people are doting after Prelacy and the Service Book. On the very first Sunday in England of the new king a grand service was held and the Prayer Book restored."

Thousands of people brought out their Prayer Books, which, to the utter surprise of the late Puritan Government, everyone seemed to have carefully hidden away somewhere, and before very long a new Act of Uniformity compelled its use throughout England. In 1662 there was a conference of Churchmen and Puritans for the purpose of revising the Prayer Book. It was held at the Savoy Palace in the Strand. The Puritans brought forward their usual objections, and the following additional ones:—

(1) They objected to the use of Cranmer's Bible in the passages of Scripture taken from Holy Writ.

(2) To the Collects.

(3) To the repetition of the General Confession by the Congregation in the Communion Service.

(4) To sponsors being required at Baptism.

(5) To part of the Burial Service being performed at the grave.

(6) To the responses of the congregation causing a confused murmuring.

(7) To the arrangement of the Litany, which they wanted made into one long prayer.

(8) To the use of the words " Sunday " and " Priest," for which they wished to substitute " Lord's Day " and " Minister."

(9) To kneeling at the Commandments and the repetition of the Kyrie.

The alterations in 1662 to your Prayer Book were as many as 600 in number. Many were very small, such as the dropping out of obsolete words and replacing them

with more modern ones. The principal alterations were: The extracts from the Bible were now taken from the authorized version of 1611, except the sentences from the Holy writ in the Communion Service and the Psalms, that is why you have "So God loved the world," instead of "God so loved the world," and "Come unto Me all ye that travail and are heavy laden," instead of "Come unto Me all ye that labour," etc.

Various occasional prayers were added, two for Ember days, Parliament, all sorts and conditions of men, the General Thanksgiving, the prayer for fair weather, and several new collects.

The declaration about kneeling at Communion was replaced.

A Baptismal Service for adults was formed, as during the Commonwealth many had grown up unbaptized; moreover, it met the need in baptizing converts from heathenism.

Forms of prayer to be used at sea and in connection with the Navy were inserted.

The new Prayer Book was adopted at the close of 1661 and received the Royal assent in 1662.

It is to be deeply regretted that on S. Bartholomew's Day, 1662, nearly 2,000 of the ablest Puritan Clergy in our church were deprived of their benefices for refusing to conform "in toto" to the revised Liturgy.

The expulsion of these men from the church meant much, for they were really the beginning of the vast Nonconformist bodies which we have with us to-day.

The Presbyterians were driven out from the church, and then the Independents and the Quakers in the time of persecution which followed were soon blended into one, and the church soon found she was confronted with an organised body of Dissenters.

We have nothing to do with the cruel persecution of these Nonconformists which soon after broke out. Beyond

that it did grievous harm to the Church, and caused the Free Churches to thrive, but the Prayer Book has remained practically unaltered since 1662, except the calendar of lessons, altered in 1872.

We may gather from our thoughts that the Prayer Book has been well received and well thought of when not forced on the people.

That every Romeward tendency has met with opposition on the part of the laity.

Our attitude as Church people should surely be to use the Prayer Book wisely and carefully in our services in church.

To treat our Nonconformist brethren with that love and courtesy one Christian brother should treat another, remembering " Charity never faileth."

And to offer uncompromising opposition to anything contrary to the xxxix articles of our church and to any alteration in the Prayer Book which might lead us Romeward.

And lastly, not to be in a hurry to leave the church because of ritualism, for every strong evangelical who goes over to dissent is a loss to the Evangelical cause of our church.

III—ITS PROTESTANTISM

We have already discussed in our previous chapter on the History of the Prayer Book the Protestant character of its successive revisions.

We saw, while even the first Prayer Book was a wonderful breaking away from the errors of Rome, discarding as it did the worship of images and relics, refusing to admit uncertain stories of the Saints and traditions of the Church, to be read therein, substituting the Scriptures, changing the Sacrifice of the Mass into the Service of Holy Communion, declaring the elevation of the Sacrament

illegal, yet this book did not go far enough, but in the providence of God it was the messenger to prepare the way for the Gospel Liturgy which was to follow.

The Church of England, in spite of its antiquity, had become corrupt; it was weak, erring, spiritually ignorant, and superstitious.

The doctrine of Transubstantiation was as fervently taught in our land in the days of Henry VIII as in Italy. The worship of Mary and the Saints was as bluntly and continually practised in England as in Rome. Monasteries and nunneries abounded; the Mass was said everywhere.

The roadsides abounded with crosses, crucifixes, little chapels for prayer. Of the images, idols, and relics there were no end.

Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, said every county was full of chapels, every chapel full of miracles, every miracle full of lies. It was in these days the first Prayer Book came forth. Tinged as it was with superstition, stained with the remnants of Popery, yet it opened the minds of the people and paved the way for its Protestant successor. It was not perfect, but it did its work. In fact, when we consider the age, the first Prayer Book was a marvel. For nearly 500 years the elements of Apostolic Christianity had been dead and buried under a mass of superstition, and that evangelical doctrine was unknown, the marvel is not that it had so many blemishes, but that it was so amazingly Protestant. But no sooner was the first Prayer Book published and studied than its errors became apparent, and the young King, wonderfully wise for his age and truly taught of God, ordered its revision. The Reformers, now more than ever enlightened by the Spirit of God, proceeded with their work, spurred on by the King and aided by the counsels of holy men, they erased errors, filled up gaps, added new features, renovated the whole, and for all practical intents and purposes this is our Prayer Book of to-day.

Remember, in this Prayer Book the word Mass is omitted, the word Table substituted for Altar, the mixing of the Water and Wine ceremonially not mentioned, although enjoined in the first Prayer Book the use of the wafer is done away with, the rubric especially ordaining that it be bread as is usually eaten.

The Invocation of the Holy Ghost was cut out, the hymn enjoined to be sung at the Holy Communion, " O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world," which appears on the surface innocent enough, was taken away to prevent any appearance of adoration of the Sacrament.

Prayers for the dead and the Service of Communion at burials, as well as the permission with regard to auricular confession, the use of genuflections and crossing in the Holy Communion, Consecration of Water in Holy Baptism and the signing of the Cross in the Marriage Service were all deleted. Now what do these things mean? Let us sum them up. Cutting out the word altar, which would have suggested the sacrifice of the Mass, the injunctions to auricular confession involving confession before Mass and priestly absolution, the reservation and seeming adoration of the elements, prayers for the dead and the implied doctrine of purgator, extreme unction and the Communion at burials implying Masses for the dead.

The Reformers were guided by the Holy Ghost to do all this, and moreover a rubric was inserted which I wish with all my heart had never been altered, saying the vestments, authorized for both priest and deacon in the church, was a surplice only. But unfortunately in the days of Elizabeth when the Prayer Book was revised in 1559, the following was inserted:—

" And here it is to be noted that the minister at the time of the Communion, and at all other times in his ministrations, shall use such ornaments in the Church as were in use by authority of Parliament in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI, according to the Act of Parliament set in the beginning of this book."

That was the original form of the so-called ornaments rubric, then what was the Act of Parliament printed in the beginning? It was an Act which enjoined the use of the surplice only.

But this was further backed up by the advertisements passed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth and the Queen's injunctions.

The advertisements published in 1566 and referred to as the binding law in the Canons of 1571 and 1604 distinctly said that without any exceptions whatsoever, in the case of parish churches, and at all services the minister should wear as the Ecclesiastical garment, the surplice. These later laws therefore clearly show the Mass vestments were not to be used.

The rubric, however, took a different form in 1662, the form it is now in:—

"And here it is to be noted that such ornaments of the church and of the ministers thereof, at all times of their ministration, shall be retained, and be in use as were in this Church of England by the authority of Parliament in the second year of the reign of King Edward VI."

From this rubric it appears that the law of the Church in 1548-9, the year of the first Prayer Book, is made the law once more, and that every minister is obliged to wear Popish vestments. But it has been pointed out that the Act of Uniformity of 1662 did not repeal Elizabeth's Act, and therefore, as that Act over-ruled the particular enactment, Charles II's Act of Uniformity did the same.

If Mass vestments were legal why for 300 years did the ministers of the Church of England disobey the law? For certainly from 1552 till 1853 they were not used in any parish church in England, when they were revived at the Church of S. Thomas-the-Martyr, Oxford. Whether Laud used them in his chapel at Lambeth I am not quite sure, as I have not been able to find any historical record. I care not now to go into the matter further, but I refer

any of you who are anxious to pursue the matter to an appendix on it in Mr. Dyson Hague's valuable book on "The Protestantism of the Prayer Book."

Now if we take up the Book of Common Prayer and examine it, not particularly but as a whole, we shall find it presents three prominent characteristics which stamp it with an unmistakable Protestantism:—

It is in the language of the people. What an untold blessing! The reformers said "It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the primitive church to have public prayer in the church, or to minister the sacraments in a tongue not understanded of the people."

Rome says: "The language of Rome is the language of religion, and the language of religion is the only proper language for worship, therefore the people must have it whether they understand it or not. Obey the Holy Mother the Church. Living languages continually changing are more suited to convey doctrines which are subject to frequent alteration. But the Catholic Church prefers old unchangeable languages because she is herself unchangeable. The Church speaks Latin because she is Apostolic, unchanging and Catholic. Obey the Church."

Our comment is, it suits Rome; the people do not, to a great extent, understand their services, they swallow blindly her superstitions and do not therefore get light. The second general stamp of its Protestant character is that it is a form of common prayer. It is shared by minister and people. Before it was a religious performance. Far away in the chancel before the altar, the priest bowed, turned, prostrated himself, muttered mysterious things in an unknown tongue. The choir chanted and sung, but only a few understood it; now the clergyman only leads the devotion of the people.

It is a communion of old and young, rich and poor, instead of muttering the priest must speak in an audible voice. When the Roman Catholic rebellion against the

Prayer Book took place, called the "Pilgrimage of Grace," they complained the Reformers had turned the service into a Christmas game. They meant they disliked the continual intervening on the part of the laity which the new service enjoined.

We may truly say by using the Prayer Book service, the people themselves should become a Royal Priesthood. The third and most important prominent Protestant characteristic of the Prayer Book is its complete Scripturalness. Where the word of God has free course and is glorified, Popery dies a natural death. Two-thirds of the Prayer Book are taken directly from the word of God.

The Lessons, Psalms, Canticles, Gospels and Epistles, all combine to bring the word into great prominence in the hearing of the people. It begins with Scripture, it ends with Scripture. In the non-conformist churches, as far as I know, it is not customary in morning and evening prayer to read more than four passages from Scripture, whereas the average number in our church services is 15 a Sunday, and sometimes 18 passages are read, and yet there are those who would say the church keeps the Scriptures in the background and clamour for simple Bible teaching.

Remember our articles declare:

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the Faith. Art. vi.

The three Creeds ought thoroughly to be received and believed for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture. Art. viii.

That it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another. Art. xx.

That the Romish Doctrine of Purgatory, pardons, worshiping and adoration of images is a fond thing vainly

invented and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God. Art. xxii.

Transubstantiation cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but it is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture. Art. xxviii.

Now let us go a little more into detail.

Our Morning and Evening Service, of course, begin with Scripture. The people are brought directly into contact with God's Holy Word, the Prayer Book by its first act declaring the Supremacy of Holy Scripture and the responsibility of the individual Soul to God. Then follows the exhortation in which the people are invited to confess their sins, not to any human mediator, but to the Almighty God, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same by His infinite goodness and mercy.

Then comes the general confession, and immediately a blow is aimed at auricular confession, for without let or hindrance each individual soul draws nigh to God, saying Almighty and Most Merciful Father, and by uniting in a great public confession we proclaim the doctrine: "There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Yes, says one of my hearers, but does not the priest then pronounce the absolution, is not that a Romish relic? It is true that the priest says what is commonly called the absolution, but look into it and you will see that it is not a Romish relic. "He (God) pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe His Holy Gospel, wherefore let us beseech Him (God, not the priest) to grant us true Repentance, and His Holy Spirit." Thus the minister in no way interferes between the soul and God, but as God's ambassador declares in God's name the terms on which pardon is offered. If you think the absolution is a remnant of popery let me tell you that it is almost certain that the men who compiled it went to the stake for their Protestantism in the days of Mary.

After the absolution follows the Lord's Prayer, not to be muttered inaudibly by the priest alone, but to be said in a clear voice by the people too, and from here to the recital of the Creed, with the exception of the Te Deum and Benedicite, the service is entirely taken up with Holy Scripture, at least half of the morning service is occupied with the word of God.

The Lord's Prayer from Matthew vi, the versicles from the Psalms, the gloria from Romans xvi, 27, and other parts of Scripture, Venite (Ps. xcv), then the Psalms and the Lessons and the Benedictus from S. Luke i, or the Jubilate, which is the 100th Psalm.

In the Romish Church only parts of the word of God were read, moreover uncertain stories and traditions occupied even more space than Scripture itself.

With regard to the rest of the prayers, they are Protestant to the core. All that savoured of Romish error was carefully omitted. Everything that related to the merit of our good works, to the Intercession of the Virgin or Saints, prayers for the dead, and to the dead. Everything that alluded to the intercession of angels was cut off as clearly and absolutely as the Church of England was cut off from Rome.

In its Romish form the Litany was full of errors, containing 92 petitions to Angels and Archangels, men and women, dead and alive. Invocations to Mary, Holy Mother of God, Michael, Gabriel, Angels, Saints, Patriarchs, Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, etc.

In 1544 Cranmer issued it in English, still containing some error, but in the second Prayer Book it stood as it is now with but little alteration.

Now let us look into the Communion Office. Ah! says some one, this is where we find the relics of Romanism. Is it? I think I have told you that while a great deal of our Morning and Evening Prayer came from the Roman Service books, in the Communion Service we have a great deal that is entirely new and Protestant to a

degree. The Communion Service is certainly not the place where the Prayer Book ceases to be Protestant. You have only to compare the Roman Mass book with our service to see.

Where in the service in the Prayer Book do you find the words Mass, holy host, immaculate host, altar, incense, where such childish and superstitious observances as kissing the altar and cup, removing the candles, censing the altar, changing the vestments, bowings and crossings, prayers for the dead, prayers to the saints, ablutions of the fingers, adoration of the host? Nowhere!

In the Communion Service of the Church of England there is a distinct repudiation of the Roman Mass. The term is never employed. The elements are administered in both kinds. The Mass is a thing to be witnessed by the people, the Holy Communion to be partaken.

Bradford said "Christ ordained this supper to be a taking matter. "Take, eat," saith He, but the Mass is a looking matter. "Peep, see, look, stoop down before."

The central object in the Mass is the visible offering upon the altar by the priest of the sacrifice of Christ's body. The central object in our service is Christ seen and fed upon by faith. In the Mass the people gather to see and worship a priest made God, in the Communion believers gather round the Table of the Lord, in remembrance of his meritorious cross and passion whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins and are made partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven.

All the errors in connection with the Holy Communion circle round the doctrine of transubstantiation which the Church utterly repudiates. This doctrine says that the bread and wine become at consecration the absolute and real body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. If this were the case, as is recognised by the Church of Rome, we could worship it, but since it is not, the Adoration of the Sacrament is prohibited by our articles, therefore at the consecration or reception of the elements never

make a special bow. By kneeling at the Holy Communion we clearly understand we are not worshipping the elements but kneel as a reverent manner of partaking and a sign of our humble and grateful thanks for the benefits we receive from Christ. Never turn and bow to the Communion Table on coming into church. It is a recognising of it as an altar and of the doctrine of Transubstantiation which the Church especially condemns in her articles. Never place any special merit upon fasting Communion. It was not partaken of fasting when it was ordained by Christ himself, nor in the earliest days of the Church, when it was accompanied by the Agate, or love feast. The custom has arisen through the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Some having said "I have no right to defile the actual body of Christ by allowing it to fall upon undigested food." I would ask them, if that be the actual body of Christ, would it not be equally irreverent to masticate it? Please do not think I at all underrate the Early Morning Communion of a Sabbath day. It is most blessed and helpful, but there is no special merit in coming fasting, though I am sure there is more self-denial in turning out of bed on a cold morning in January than staying at the close of the Evening Service. The Church forbids also the Reservation of the Sacrament because it led to it being worshipped. For the same reason the carrying of the Sacrament about in procession and the observance of the Feast of Corpus Christi is a Roman and not an English custom.

Non-Communicating attendance is by no means to be encouraged. Our Prayer Book says no service may be held unless three partake and that only those who worthily partake receive the benefits of the Sacrament. The Communion Service is very strong on it, it says in the Exhortation: "Draw near with faith and take this Holy Sacrament to your comfort."

In the prayer of Humble Access we say: "Grant us therefore gracious Lord so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, etc."

In the Prayer of Consecration:

" Grant that we receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine," again " We most heartily thank Thee that Thou dost vouchsafe to feed us who have duly received these holy mysteries with the spiritual food," etc. Thus we see this system of non-communicating attendance which has been creeping into the Church has no warrant from our Protestant Communion Service.

Our Communion Service is solemn, simple, practical, helpful, scriptural. To the devout converted man or woman everything combines to bring one into the very presence of God and into close communion with the Saviour.

> Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face,
> Here faith can touch and handle things unseen,
> Here do I grasp with firmer hand Thy grace,
> And all my weariness upon Thee lean;
> Here do I feed upon the Bread of God,
> Here drink with Thee the royal Wine of Heaven,
> Here do I lay aside each earthly load,
> Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

We now turn to the Baptismal Service. Is that Protestant? It is.

The theory of the Roman Church is that the work of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Baptism is always carried out by the performance of the rite itself, apart from any antecedent or accompanying faith in the recipients or any elective decree of God. In fact, that all persons baptized in the Roman Church cannot possibly be lost, no matter how evil their lives are afterwards, eventually they will be saved. Now, without entering into details, I unhesitatingly say our Church does not hold that position. It does not believe that every child sprinkled at the font in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost is converted, saved, and safe for ever. The Reformers themselves didn't believe it, for Cranmer himself, in his own writings, which are still extant, said:

" In baptism those that come feignedly and those that come unfeignedly both be washed with the Sacramental Water, but both be not washed with the Holy Ghost and

clothed with Christ. All that be washed with water be not washed with the Holy Spirit." It truly says, this child being regenerate, and I shall I trust fully explain that later.

Now, in the Church of Rome, the Priest first blows upon the child and bids the unclean spirit come out; next, with his thumb, he makes the sign of the Cross upon the infant's brow and breast, saying " Receive the sign of the Cross."

Having prayed, he blesses the Holy Salt, and with many crossings and prayers places a small portion of salt in the child's mouth, saying " receive the salt of wisdom: may it be to thee a propitiation to life eternal." The prayers proceed with many more crossings, adjurations, and exorcisms of the devil. The rest of the service includes the touching of the ears and nose of the infant with saliva, and anointing with oil. Then the Baptism itself, the wrapping of the child in the chrisom, and last of all the placing of a lighted taper in the infant's hand, or the sponsors, with the words, " receive this burning light and keep thy baptism without blame."

Now how much has the Prayer Book in common with Rome to-day? Nothing! Our service has its difficulties, I admit, but it is Protestant. After it was completed, Peter Martyr, one of the most uncompromising Protestants, praised it much; he says " all things are removed from it which could nourish superstition." The early Puritans raised many objections to the Prayer Book, but none was raised about the doctrine of regeneration as taught in it. These men truly attacked the Prayer Book and were uncompromising about everything they thought Romish, but they rightly understood the phrase " this child is regenerate."

Let me speak of two things in the Baptismal Service which have been a stumbling block:—

(1) " Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin." The meaning of it is clear. It is a simple petition that the water to be employed for the sacred act

of Baptism may be set apart for that purpose and separated from common uses. Even the Presbyterians pray for sanctifying the water to this spiritual use.

(2) The sign of the Cross on the forehead of the baptized. The Puritans very much objected to this, and a rubric was inserted at the end referring us to the sixth Canon, which states " that the sign of the Cross in baptism was one of the usages of the primitive church, whereby Christians acknowledged in the face of heathen and Jews they were not ashamed to acknowledge Him for their Saviour who died for them upon the Cross, and that their children, also dedicated by that badge to His service, should not be ashamed of the Faith of the Crucified." Alford's beautiful verses say:—

" In token that thou shalt not fear
Christ crucified to own,
We print the Cross upon Thee here
And stamp thee His alone,
In token that thou shalt not blush
To glory in His name,
We blazon here upon thy front
His glory and His shame."

I fear I must leave the other services, but they are as Protestant as the rest of the Book. We may thank God for the wonderful soundness of our Articles and our Prayer Book.

The Prayer Book is no New Theology. It teaches the utterly ruined and lost estate of man; it no less clearly shows the necessity for the Atonement and puts it in the forefront of her teaching. She does not hesitate to speak most clearly of everlasting punishment in creeds and prayers, in Litany and Burial Service. There is no New Theology in the Prayer Book, it honours Holy Scripture, giving it its right place, it is strongly Protestant and it is full of blessing. While there are phrases and sentences and perhaps rubrics I would feign see changed, yet I feel it will be safest if we Evangelical Church people resist every effort to any alteration whatever.

We will never sanction the legalizing of Mass vestments, or the introduction of Romish doctrine.

The Prayer Book is all right; for 350 years it has been the Service book of the Children of God in the Church of England. I heartily thank God for the blessing it has many a time brought to my soul. I venture to say thousands are uplifted every Lord's day by its use. Young couples are solemnized and helped as they are united for life, bidden to love and cherish one another and to live together in holy love, unto their lives end. The little children are brought and dedicated to God in a service at the font in earliest infancy. Thousands have been comforted and blessed at the open grave by the beautiful words of the burial service, which bid us " sorrow not as men without hope for them that sleep in Christ." Many a bright young life has been yielded to God wholly in Confirmation and the prayers of the Bishop and people " Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy heavenly grace, that he may continue Thine for ever," have been answered, and from those young lives have come Ministers of the Gospel, Bishops and Pastors of the flock of God, Day and Sunday School teachers, and lay workers, Godly mothers and fathers who in their turn have trained their children in the fear of the Lord.

How many can look back with grateful thanks to the quiet hour spent on a Spring or Summer morning in the early Communion Service of the Church when there went up once more to God in earnest prayer the words:—

" And here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto Thee," Oh, let us now renew this consecration of ourselves to God in Prayer.

IV—ITS VALUE

The best test of the real value of the Book of Common Prayer is: What is it doing for the spiritual life of those using it; is it a blessing, or is it not? Am I cheered and brightened Sabbath by Sabbath as I use it, or am I not?

If the testimonies of men and women to-day are to be relied on, and I believe they are, the Book of Common Prayer is of the greatest value as a Spiritual force; its services are having a mighty influence where rightly used.

A member of our congregation on Monday morning told me that the previous day he had been dreadfully depressed and that the load had only been lifted from his soul by the Services of God's house, and there all his care seemed to go.

A Sister who is a regular worshipper in Church —a worker in God's vineyard—yet who at one time had grown quite careless, told me that the first time she came back to Church the very first words uttered in the Service awakened her soul and were the means of her conversion; the sentence used was:—

" The sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou will not despise."

A lady of the congregation, who has passed through a sea of trouble, told me the place where she was happiest was God's house and the service that blessed her soul was the Prayer Book service.

Canon Faussett tells of a Durham pitman, who being found reading the Litany was asked why he loved the Prayer Book; he answered, " one sentence in this book, if there were no other, would of itself be sufficient to save the world. It is this, ' O holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, have mercy upon us miserable sinners.' Oh sir, what have I not experienced in those words; I have felt the sweet drawings of a Father's love, the cleansing power of a Saviour's blood, and the Sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit's grace, and I have felt my whole soul entwined as it were in the sacred three."

Some Christians object to call themselves miserable sinners or to confess that the burden of their sins is intolerable. I admit that we need to walk very closely with God to use these words honestly.

Then has the Prayer Book been any blessing to your soul?

Has the Communion Service brought you sweet calm and peace? Many of us can say yes.

Has the service for the Burial of the Deal brought you comfort and a glorious hope of the resurrection to Eternal Life? Many of us can say yes.

I think there is nothing that thrills the soul of the young believer more than the singing in the Confirmation Service of the hymn,

> " Come Holy Ghost our Souls inspire,
> And lighten with celestial fire."

John Wesley said of the Prayer Book,

" I know of no Liturgy in the world, ancient or modern, which breathes more of solid Scriptural rational piety than the Common Prayer Book of the Church of England."

Robert Hall, Baptist Minister, said,

" The Evangelical purity of its sentiments, the chastened fervour of its devotion, and the majestic simplicity of its language combine to place it in the very first rank of inspired compositions."

Dr. Torrey (Congregationalist) speaks in one of his sermons, " Of the marvellously beautiful Liturgy of the Church of England," and told a friend of mine, Dr. Neville Bradley, " that he had found the most deeply spiritually minded men and the most devout Bible students among those who use the despised Prayer Book which our brethren in Christ of the other denominations have called the churches ' crutches '."

Few of us perhaps have considered the immense value of a Liturgical form and fewer still the peculiar excellencies of our Prayer Book. Many of them I have already alluded to. I am going to give you now further reasons why I feel it is far best to have a form of worship than to have extempore prayer only. There are and always

will be differences of opinion among Christians as to the value of a Liturgy

Which of the two plans is best, which wisest, which most helpful ?

For myself I am perfectly decided; before ordination, I went to the services of most denominations; I became by choice a Minister of the Church of England. A dear friend deeply spiritual, tried to persuade me otherwise. The Church of England, said he, was tainted with Ritualism, therefore I had better keep out. I suggested this was all the more reason why another evangelical should enter its ranks.

I think it is far better to have a form of public prayer than to have all extempore prayer, and for the following reasons:—

1st. Extempore prayer makes the Congregation dependent on the minister's soundness in doctrine. He may be slipping away from the Faith into Romanism, Unitarianism or Scepticism. Mind you, if a man is heterodox, unsound, it will appear in his extempore prayers as well as in his sermons.

However brilliant an orator a man is his hearers place their souls in danger if he is unorthodox, and the whole heresy will colour his prayers.

A brother writing in a letter to me a few days ago says:

" If people did but know the Prayer Book's interesting history, its struggle for existence, I think they would make up their minds to the value of their inheritance.

At the present time, the shock that some nonconformists have to undergo by the heresy of one of their chief leaders, seems a splendid opening for showing the advantage of a binding dogma."

2nd. Extempore prayer makes a congregation entirely dependent on the Minister's health or circumstances, or what are commonly called his frames and feelings. He may

be sick, ill or tired out when leading the devotions. He may be depressed in spirit through family trouble or private affliction.

3rd. Again, extempore prayer makes the congregation entirely dependent on the minister's memory. He may forget many things which he ought to pray for and which he intended to pray for before he entered church. Those of us who preach know how often we forget to say things we intended to say. It would be the same in prayer. He may omit to mention many things before God which he had privately intended to make subjects of prayer. He is only a man and his memory is liable to err.

4th. Moreover, often in a large building with an aged minister it is difficult to hear what he says; there are also in every congregation deaf people who cannot hear. Extempore prayer would be entirely lost upon them, but with the Prayer Book Service they can all follow, all join in prayer and are practically independent of the minister. I am persuaded the Scriptural Prayer Book is better for public worship than extempore prayer.

5th. Again, extempore prayer makes it almost impossible for the congregation to join in public worship. They cannot possibly know what the minister is going to pray for. They have to keep their mind continually on the stretch, anticipating what is coming next, and while the minister is praying may lose the thread of his prayer.

The revised translation of Acts ii, 42, already alluded to, says: "and they continued steadfastly in the Apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." Moreover, we are told they prayed with one accord, which seems to me to point to the fact that it at least included a form of prayer.

A good Christian man told Canon Barnes Lawrence that he could not attend our worship because there were four or five things he could not agree to in the Liturgy.

The Canon told him that was all the more reason why he should worship with us, because when he came to objectional parts he need not join in, as he knew beforehand exactly what was coming; in chapel he could never be sure but only hope for the best.

If a sensible person, said Chas. Simeon—the godly Chas. Simeon—were to write down all the prayers that were uttered under the name of extempore prayer, in different chapels, for one Sunday, he would fall down on his knees and thank God for the Liturgy of the Church of England.

6th. Moreover, extempore prayer in course of time becomes as much or almost as much a form to most congregations as any form of prayer that ever was composed. The thoughts of ministers after a few years are found to run very much in the same groove and upon the same rails. They get set phrases, modes of expression and set orders of petition, and if we are going to have forms of prayer let us have the best—the very best—and that to my mind is the Prayer Book.

It is easy for ignorant persons to say that to use the Prayer Book is Popish, legal, formal or bondage; that the clergyman can't pray without one; let them come to our weekly prayer meeting and they will find neither minister nor congregation are unable to open their lips in spontaneous prayer.

Remember that while the utterances of Godly Nonconformist ministers of the type of Dr. Campbell Morgan, Dr. Pierson and Rev. F. B. Meyer are very helpful and most inspiring, you have to consider, not the one or two stars, but the great mass of ministers and churches; most of the clergy and ministers are not gifted with extraordinary power, and I firmly believe it is far better for the general good of the church to use a form of prayer; that the most lasting blessing for use week by week, month by month, year by year, is to be obtained by the use of our Book of Common Prayer.

7th. Now all denominations use forms, every one of them. I do not know a single denomination that does not use hymns, and what are hymns but forms of praise; indeed many of them are forms of prayer; for instance,

> " Take my life and let it be,
> Consecrated, Lord, to Thee,
> Take my moments and my days
> Let them flow in ceaseless praise."

If forms of praise, why not forms of prayer? On what principle can it be contended that it is right and Christian to sing pre-composed hymns and yet wrong and formal to use pre-composed prayers? Moreover our Prayer Book does not shut out all extempore prayer, for the minister is at liberty to use at his discretion extempore prayer in the pulpit. I must admit I like this liberty and frequently exercise it, as you know. We therefore in the church have the double advantage of the form of prayer and extempore prayer, both.

8th. We have, I think, in every chapter noticed in some form or other the special value of our Prayer Book. We have frequently noticed, first, the immense quantity of God's word the service contains. This alone is a guarantee of orthodoxy and here the desk keeps the pulpit in check. Take away the Bible parts of the Prayer Book and how much have you left, on an average only one page in three.

9th. The doctrine of the Prayer Book is therefore wonderfully sound. The sinfulness of man, Redemption by the Blood of Christ, daily need of the Holy Spirit's help and guidance, the weakness of human nature, the personality of the Devil, the reality and eternity of Heaven and Hell, the love, mercy and grace of Jesus Christ, all these things appear again and again. Although there are parts of the Prayer Book liable to misconstruction, no impartial judge can deny it is scriptural and sound.

10th. Then there is the congregational character of our worship. There is not another church in the world

which gives the congregation so much to do as ours. We do not compel the people to sit in silence. Some Jewish friends of mine once wanted to come to a Christian Church that they might hear the congregation joining in the service. Every member of the congregation has a place in the worship.

11th. Moreover, look at the comprehensiveness of our services; it fairly sweeps the whole circle of man's needs; bodies and souls, things temporal and things eternal.

An old lady once went to Church, she had been accustomed to Chapel, and in the service there came the petition: "For those who travel by land or by water," and when she got home she said with tears in her eyes, "they prayed for my dear sailor boy, and all the people said 'We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord,' and I never once heard him prayed for in the Chapel."

I do not think any church on earth brings so many matters before God in its public worship as the Church of England.

12th. The shortness of its prayers, the preciseness and simplicity of its worship makes it really suitable to the wants of the poor and unlearned. Perhaps some may differ from me on this point, but I maintain that it is easier for an unlearned person to follow the simple collects of the Prayer Book, even if there is occasionally an obsolete word, rather than the long and sometimes argumentive prayers of ministers. The little collects contain much in few words and if a soul loses the thread of the prayer he can soon start again. I must admit the difficulty some experience in finding the places, but with a little careful study this will soon be mastered.

13th. Now let me deal with one or two objections to the Prayer Book in closing, though the real doctrinal difficulties we shall tackle later on.

(a) The same words are repeated over and over again, therefore they are liable to become mechanical; they lose their novelty and freshness. We will admit at once

that perhaps the amount of repetition might be reduced. That there is a danger of the services becoming mechanical no one will deny. Yet how wonderfully the reformers endeavoured to meet that difficulty, by making the service so responsive that the devout worshipper is almost bound to keep his mind fixed upon the service. With regard to repetition we must not forget our Lord Himself prayed the same prayer three times over in the Garden of Gethsemane. What God warns us of in His words is vain repetitions. Moreover let us remember a very small portion of the service is always the same; Psalms, Lessons, Collects and sometimes Canticles change, sometimes the Ante-Communion is read, sometimes the Litany, sometimes the Prayers.

(b) Another objection raised is to the chanting of the Psalms, they are not so Christian or searching or spiritual as Wesley's or Sankey's hymns. We chant the Psalter because (1) this is the hymn book of God's ancient church—our Church before Christ. (2) Because it is the hymn book bound up in the middle of our Bibles.

They were given by inspiration of God and are profitable and therefore we will not discard them. We may sing modern hymns, too, but surely we must sing the hymns of the Bible. Objection has been raised to the imprecatory Psalms, those which call for judgment upon our enemies; how can the Christian sing those; well I can sing them because I fully understand the Spirit in which they were written and I do not apply the same meaning quite as the Psalmist of old. There is so much that is comforting and helpful, for their God is our God and our hearts and frailties and sorrows and needs are like theirs, and therefore the words in which they breathed forth their trust and prayer still find an echo in our hearts.

(c) Some object to the continual use of the state prayers. You should say less about the King and more about the King of Kings; pray less for the rich and more for the poor; but the Bible expressly commands us to pray for the powers that be; there is no one that we need

to pray for more when the very peace of the Church is at their mercy. The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, He turneth it whithersoever He will; who, then, shall blame us because we pray for kings and those in authority. And as for praying more for the rich than the poor, please remember that it is not the poor but the rich that find it so hard to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

(d) An objection which is not so often made as it used to be in times past is: You repeat Sunday by Sunday Creeds. What has that to do with real worship? They are not only definitions of our belief but also words of praise to God. Anyone coming to our church can hear in any service a definition of our faith.

Finally, let us remember our salvation does not depend on being a member of a church which uses a Prayer Book or a church which does not. We must be born again. You can't use the Prayer Book properly until you are. If the Prayer Book is all we have said it is, let us see to it that we use it properly. Let us always follow the services carefully with our service books, not trusting to our memory, feeling we know it so well. I am sure the reverent following of the service is most helpful. Let us say the responses boldly and from the heart; it is grand to hear the Lord's Prayer, the General Confession and the General Thanksgiving repeated by the people with one accord. Let everyone in church say reverently and earnestly the prayers and responses. Let us see to it we use not simply morning and evening prayer but the Service of the Holy Communion, perhaps the best and most helpful of all services. Dear friends, use it and use it continually.

Perhaps there are some who have never really taken advantage of the opportunity of coming forward for confirmation and joining in that service; the years have slipped by. Let me say come forward now.

A lady I know was confirmed last year, most of her children had already been confirmed, yet she boldly came forward before her own children, was confirmed and has never regretted it. The Canons of the church tell you,

you are not a full church member until you do, although you are a member of the invisible church from the time of conversion.

This ancient Liturgy of ours links all devout Churchmen the wide world over, and year by year carries them through the whole cycle of Christian Doctrine. There is a special bond between us and our dear missionaries for God in the mission field. Week by week we all use the same words at the Throne of Grace, and we also say " we believe in the Communion of Saints."

It is a sacred delight to me to realize that in our Communion office we unite with Angels and Archangels and all the Company of Heaven in the very words of their Ter Sanctus; it is only a lesser delight to know that in these prayers, hallowed by a thousand years, we unite with Saints in every part of the world below:

" As o'er each continent and island
The dawn leads on another day,
The voice of prayer is never silent
Nor dies the strain of praise away."

V—ITS DIFFICULTIES

" When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into all truth."

—S. John xvi, 13.

At the outset of perhaps the most important of all my writings on the Prayer Book, I desire to say by way of warning, that if anyone has come here to-night with a prejudice against the Prayer Book, having already made up your mind upon a subject and quite unwilling, however convincing the arguments to accept them, it will be almost a waste of your time listening, for some people thrive on argument, and there is an old and true saying,

" Convince a man against his will,
And he remains of the same opinion still."

But if, as I am sure is the case with most, if not all of you, you come with a desire to have difficulties cleared up, you come with an honest and true heart. I am sure God will give you His blessing. May the Holy Spirit Himself whom Jesus has promised shall guide us into all truth give us His guidance to-night.

It will not be possible to speak of all the difficulties of the Prayer Book in the short time allotted to me but I desire to deal with those that have been a stumbling block to many. I trust my explanation of them to-night may clear away your doubts and that God will show you as He did me that there is really no difficulty in accepting the church position.

First, then, let me take certain statements in the Baptismal Service with regard to Regeneration. After the baptismal service proper, the words are used " Seeing then that this child is regenerate," and again " We yield Thee hearty thanks that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this child with Thy Holy Spirit."

Some people say these sentences can only admit of one meaning, namely: " That the Church maintains the Doctrine of Baptismal regeneration that all children baptized are converted and therefore saved. They settle the point, they say there is no room for doubt. Let us examine it and see if these things be so. I unhesitatingly say such doctrine was never intended, it is contrary to the whole Spirit of the Prayer Book, and I am going to give you my reasons.

Now first let me warn you against a fatal mistake which some even of you my hearers have been making in wresting isolated expressions from their contexts and taking them in their simple and literal meaning. It is a foolish and unsound method of reasoning to take one or two sentences from that which has been written as a great whole and to place a certain meaning on them and then refuse to enquire whether that meaning can be reconciled with the general spirit of the rest of the book. Remember this is what the Roman Catholics do, they say Jesus said

" This is My body, this is My blood," therefore it is His body and it is His blood, actually and really; it settles the question. Remember this is what the Arians and I may say some of the new Theologians do when they want to prove that Jesus was inferior to His Father, they take one text " My father is greater than I." It is vain for you to tell them there are other texts which put a different meaning upon this, they will not have them. When the Socinian wants to prove " Jesus was only man," he takes the text " The man Christ Jesus," and he refuses to listen to any reasoning on the subject.

Now this is the kind of argument that has been and is being used about statements in the Prayer Book. I warn you against it. But let us see if saying all baptized infants are regenerate is to contradict the great principles upon which the Prayer Book was drawn up or not. The principle on which the Prayer Book is drawn up is to suppose all those who are members of the church are in reality what they are in profession. The Prayer Book was compiled for true believers, people who have been born of God, sanctified by the Holy Ghost. It takes the highest standard of what a Christian ought to be and is all through worded accordingly. The minister addresses those who assemble for worship as believers. The words put into their mouths are words of God's believing children, but those who drew up the Prayer Book never meant to assert that all using it were saved men and women, the articles themselves expressly say that in the visible church the evil will ever be mingled with the good. It would never have done for the Reformers to have compiled the Prayer Book for unconverted people, because no one would have used it. Now let us see what this general principle of the Prayer Book means. We take first the collects and we find in the collect for Sexagesima, " O Lord God who seest that we put not our trust in anything that we do." Is that true of every member of our congregation, when some are relying upon their works for salvation. We are bound to answer " No, it is a charitable supposition," or again " Grant that we who now know Thee by Faith may have the fruition

of thy glorious Godhead." Do we all know Him by faith, do not many unsaved people worship with us? We are bound to admit it. We to whom Thou hast given a hearty desire to pray. But has God given all those who come to His House a hearty desire to pray. Do they all come with pure motives? We say, "No, this must be as Bishop Ryle points out a charitable supposition." This is the only principle by which all our services can be interpreted; for instance, in the Marriage Service, the bride and bridegroom are frequently called God's servants, but many of them are not.

In the Burial Service we say: "It hath pleased God to take to Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed"; moreover, we say: "In sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life." Surely this cannot be true of everyone we bury, yet, as the Prayer Book is written for the use of believers (since it would never do to write as though the soul was lost), it gives him the benefit of the doubt. So when we come to the Service of Holy Baptism, it firstly pre-supposes the child to be the child of believing parents and the sponsors to be men and women of God. As believers, they are exhorted to pray that the child may be born again and encouraged to lay hold upon the promises. The principle the Church lays down is that Baptism, when rightly and worthily received, is a means whereby we may receive inward and spiritual grace, even a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness. Since the Ministers cannot see the workings of the Holy Spirit, the Church wisely leans on to the side of charity.

The Reformers could not draw up two Services of Holy Baptism, one supposed to be for believers and another for unbelievers, it would have often caused friction, so they drew up a form containing the highest standard of Spiritual privilege and blessing.

Now we must be consistent with our Prayer Books and if all children are actually regenerate in Baptism because the service says "This child is regenerate" then it also follows that all people who use the collects have

faith and a hearty desire to pray; all women who are churched put their trust in the Lord; all members of the Church who die, are dear brethren and rest in the Lord; and every child who says the Catechism is sanctified by the Holy Ghost. In such only, says our articles, as worthily receive the Sacrament they have a wholesome and good effect.

" They that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church."

Let me once again quote Archbishop Cranmer's views. " In Baptism, those that come feigned and those that come unfeigned both be washed with the Sacramental Water but ' All that be washed with water be not washed with the Holy Spirit '."

I therefore say that the Prayer Book does not teach that all children Baptized are therefore converted, and people have put quite a wrong interpretation upon the words of the Baptismal Service.

The next difficulty I find some have, with regard to infant Baptism, is in the matter of sponsors. There are those who maintain that it is not possible for the sponsors to stand for the children. We say there are two things conditional in baptism: one is Repentance, the other Faith.

Why then are infants baptized when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform them ?

Because they promise them both by their sureties, which promise when they come of age themselves are bound to perform.

But is this substitution acceptable to God, and I go to the Word of God and I find God always has accepted a substitute or representative.

I find in Gen. xxii " the ram offered instead of Isaac "; in Exodus xii " the lamb without blemish offered instead of the first born "; I find the tribe of Levi standing in religious affairs for the nation; in Leviticus all along we find the use of substitutes, and of course we find the One

great Sacrifice of the Cross of Calvary offered as a substitute for us all.

Moreover, in the second chapter of St. Mark's Gospel you have the four men bringing the paralytic to Jesus, a man who could not be responsible for himself, and Jesus, seeing the faith of the men who brought him, said: " Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." But mark these substitutes, these sacrifices had to be those acceptable to God; the blind, the spotted, the halt were not so; thus we see the sponsors need to be believing, earnest praying Christians.

Then the work of substitution could only help and be of use to those who personally accepted it.

Just as Christ died and put all into a salvable state, but only those who accept the salvation offered are saved; so those in Baptism are brought into a state of grace, and those who in after life truly accept what was done for them there are saved. But it is wrong, and absolutely wrong, to say there is no grace given in Holy Baptism, to say little children are incapable of receiving blessing as infants receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit.

What does Baptism so administered do for the child? Something at once. At once that child is dedicated to God in Christ. At once it is a member of His visible community under Christ, the Head. At once He gives it His sealed promise of all His blessings, ready to be claimed. Those of us who have stood at the font will agree that it is one of the most solemn imaginable ways of at once not merely connecting those children with the visible Church of Christ, but laying them upon the heart of the Church as its dear young members to be tended, cared for, taught for the Lord from their first dawn of consciousness. This, then, they get at once; they get outward membership; they are linked, they are embodied into the company of Christ at once. And is that nothing? But then, as to the deepest Spiritual blessings of the covenant, pardon and holiness and heaven in prospect. This, too, they get at once in one respect, but not at once in another. They get it in pledge then and there, but it awaits realization in

fact. It is laid up for them till they claim it. They have it at once—under the seal. But they have to go and use the seal, and claim the property for themselves and repent and believe and come to Jesus.

Many years ago a little child was baptized. Its godmother was a wealthy Christian lady and by way of a christening gift she gave a large sum of money. It was given in the form of a cheque upon the bank made payable to the name of the infant. This cheque was of course carefully kept by the child's parents as the child's guardians as the child's precious property. But how was it to be used? It had to wait until the child could append its signature. Now did the baby possess the money from the first? Yes and no. In pledge, in promise, in covenant, in seal the child was rich from the first; but in actual experience it was helpless and needy until it should grow up to claim. Let us always remind our children the cheque is signed but it needs endorsement.

St. John the Baptist was full of the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb. Jesus Himself blessed the little ones and said: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

The church has beautifully safeguarded Infant Baptism by the solemn rite of Confirmation, which gives every child an opportunity of confirming those Baptismal vows when they have reached years of discretion. I always maintain the Church position is so much better than that of the Baptist, for we have all the advantages of Infant Baptism in addition to Confirmation, a most valuable ordinance which is I believe of even more value than what the Baptists call "Believer's Baptism." Some object to Infant Baptism in toto. We practice the rite—

(a) From the Analogy of circumcision: Under the Old Testament dispensation every male child was circumcised on the eighth day and brought into covenant relationship with God. All through the Scriptures these covenant blessings were to the seed also. Abraham believed and

was circumcised as an adult and conscious covenanter. Then Isaac was born, Abraham's infant son, and Isaac as an infant was circumcised. Why? Because he was covenanter's child. And it was in prospect of his being a believer in due time; thus he received the covenant seal. But, says one, the women were thus outside it. My reply is woman never received her rightful position under the Old Testament Covenant; even now you find the Jews thanking God that He did not make them women; They are not allowed full privileges in the Synagogue and are really not very sure that they have souls at all.

"Now what is the seed of the Church?" Acts ii, 39. Peter says: "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." The promise is to you and your children.

The Apostles nowhere bid Christian parents train their children or teach them with a view to Baptism. Rather they seem to take the membership of the children for granted, as you will see from such passages as Eph. vi, 1-4, and again in I Cor. vii, 14, where we read: "Now, are your children holy?" The holiness they alluded to cannot possibly mean the holiness of personal conversion and faith, for that is not the point in the passage. The Apostle is speaking of birth and parentage alone. He says in effect that to be the child of a Christian parent, the child of a member of the Church of Christ, is to be in some sense holy; then why deny it, the only known sign and seal of admission to the covenant position.

Mark you, the Baptism of infants is nowhere forbidden in the New Testament. There is not a single text from Matthew to Revelation which either directly or indirectly hints that infants should not be baptized. Some may perhaps see little in this silence. To my mind it is a silence full of meaning.

The first Christians were by birth Jews. They had been accustomed in the Jewish Church to have their children admitted into Church membership by a solemn

ordinance as a matter of course. Without a distinct prohibition from the Lord Jesus Christ they would naturally bring their children to be baptized. But there was no prohibition. That satisfies me that no change was intended.

The Baptist says: "Show me one text which says directly: 'Infants are to be baptized,' and I say the very absence of it proves the Lord meant no change to take place."

I might ask them to show me one text which says women may be admitted to the Lord's Supper, or that gambling is wrong, and they could not, yet we know God would not have the women kept back on the one hand and that gambling is absolutely wrong on the other.

Then the Baptism of households is specially mentioned in the New Testament. We read in Acts that Lydia was baptized, and her household; "The Philippian jailer and all his household"; "The household of Stephanus." Would not the household include young and old? Do you say no?

When I read Joseph saying: "Take food for the famine of your households," think you the little ones were left out—left to starve—not at all.

If a Jew and Jewess came to this Church and were converted and accepted Jesus as their Messiah and desired to be baptized, and they had one little son, whom we will call Samuel, and they say we would like also to have our little boy of two baptized; if I were a Baptist I should say: "Well, Mr. Levy, it will be a great joy to me to baptize you and Mrs. Levy, but I can't baptize Samuel." But, says he, you have taught me that the new covenant is so much better than the old, the Christian Dispensation, perferably to the Jewish. In the old covenant I was permitted to bring my child, now you refuse to receive him. What could I say?

I thank God, as a Minister of the Church of England, I could complete the work of baptism in that family.

I would say to that father, in the name of the Lord Jesus: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Now I might go on to show you that the baptism of infants was quite common in the Jewish Church. When proselytes were received by baptism, their children were also received and baptized with them as a matter of course. Every Christian writer of repute, except Tertullian, in the first 1,500 years of Christianity speaks of infant baptism as a regular custom of the Church. All the Reformers, like Luther and Calvin, Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer believed in it, and the Church to-day, thank God, accepts it.

But, says another, I object to sprinkling; I think the proper way of baptizing is by immersion. Before I deal with this let me say if you read your Baptismal Service rubrics you will find the Church does not object to immersion, and I will immerse any child or adult who has not already been baptized, with pleasure, but we maintain it is not the quantity of water put upon a person that baptizes them.

I do not at all think that the whole of those 3,000 people on the day of Pentecost were immersed.

I do not for a moment believe that the Philippian jailer, baptized in the middle of the night in jail, was dipped.

I ask you, do you think a method of baptism would be enjoined which would debar thousands of souls from receiving the sacred rite? These are days of missionary enterprize, praise be to God; even among the Eskimo, our dear brother in Christ, Ernest Peck, is making disciples; are they to be debarred the privilege of baptism because the rigidity of the region prevents them being dipped?

Mr. Hadow and his party have gone to carry the Gospel to the barren deserts of the Sudan. Oft-times it is difficult to get enough water for the bare necessities of life. Are the converts to be denied Baptism because they can't be dipped?

Again, in the Zenanas in India, where it is hard enough to reach the women at all, and the Baptism of believers by immersion would be quite impossible, are they not to be Baptized because they may not be dipped?

Or the thousands of invalids to whom dipping would be detrimental physically, are they, poor things, to be denied the blessed privilege of Baptism? God forbid. I thank God, in the Church of England, I can baptize them by sprinkling.

But, says the Baptist, does not the Greek word baptizo mean: to dip? I reply, not always. Turn to Luke xi, 38. We read that when our Lord dined with a certain Pharisee, that the Pharisee marvelled that He had not first washed before dinner. How foolish it would be to render the Greek word for washed as dipped. The Pharisee marvelled that He had not first dipped before dinner, when of course it means water had not been poured over His hands.

Much as I would like to tarry still further on the subject, I dare not, but let me say to the young Christians: If you do not yet feel able to hold the Church's position with regard to infant Baptism, at least be modest about it. Remember that the most learned scholars, men of wonderful attainments—like Ryle and Lightfoot, of the 19th century, and Latimer and Cranmer of the 16th century—have held these views, and do not be bragging and writing out your views and airing them in public, but humbly ask the Holy Spirit to teach you.

Perhaps your mind is not yet enlightened on these points, and the way to get light is to keep it open and seek God's face.

It is only in the last 300 years that anyone has ever doubted the value of Infant Baptism.

We must not on the one hand set too high a value on it, but God forbid that we should belittle it, lest we be found to sin against God.

THE USE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

I want to speak now of the use of the Lord's Prayer in our Services. Some have objected to its frequent repetition, they say our Lord said: "Use not vain repetitions." True, but He Himself prayed the same prayer three times in the Garden of Gethsemane. We in the Church maintain that although we repeat the Lord's Prayer, the repetitions are not vain.

The first use of the Lord's Prayer is at the beginning of the Morning Service, after the Absolution. The service used to begin thus, but then it was meant in a penitent sense, so did not include the Doxology, which, as you know, consists of the words: "For thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever." But now, since it is preceded by the General Confession and Absolution, it is meant rather to lead us up to the Service of Praise and to put us into the right attitude to say: "O Lord, open Thou our lips, and our mouth shall show forth Thy praise." The dominant note of the Lord's Prayer here is that of praise. It next occurs after the Creed, marking the commencement of the prayer service, and is therefore preceded by a penitential preface which we call the Lesser Litany, and is of course used in the sense of prayer; there is no doxology; we are not there meant to be led up to praise but prayer. In the Litany the Lord's Prayer forms the close of the Litany proper, and in using it we sum up all our previous petitions in the words Jesus Himself taught us.

In the Holy Communion Service the Lord's Prayer occurs twice, at the beginning and after the administration.

Originally, at the beginning of the service, the Clergyman used it in the Vestry as a preparation for the Service, it has now been wisely ordained that instead of the priest praying it to himself in the Vestry, he prays it aloud, together with the collect for purity as a preparation for the solemn service which is to follow.

After the Communion I need hardly point out it is used Eucharistically as an outburst of praise and thankfulness to God for blessing received; so, too, in the Service for Confirmation and Baptism; it immediately follows the rite itself and is used in the sense of praise; it is perhaps somewhat unfortunate that since two or three services are used together we sometimes have it four or five times in one service, but certainly we are not guilty of vain repetition, and there is always a good reason why we use it.

The next difficulty is the Athanasian Creed. Some object to its use, but before we criticise it, let us remember it has done wonderful service in days past, every clause of it has been inserted to combat some heresy, and it has been the battle ground where many a battle has been fought and won for Christ.

The Monarchisms denied the Trinity and said Christ was mere man. The Patripassians said it was God the Father Himself who became incarnate. The Sabellians confounded the persons. The Arians again denied the Divinity of Christ. The Docetac denied His humanity. The Macedonians denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost, and the Athanasian Creed is chiefly founded on the second clause, and last but one. The second clause is: "Which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly," and the last clause but one is: "And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire."

Now I am quite sure that a person might have sufficient saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, even if there was one little point in the Creed he could not hold, so I do heartily wish that were altered.

In 1689, those appointed to revise the Prayer Book drew up a rubric stating: "The condemning clauses are to be understood as relating only to those who obstinately deny the substance of the Christian Faith." This is the spirit in which we accept it to-day, so we will not fear to

say it. It is unfortunate that this rubric was never inserted. I do not know of any other difficulty in connection with my Prayer Book. These three things suggested themselves to me, I pray they may have been some help to you.

The Prayer Book is not infallible, but since God has set his seal on it by making it a priceless blessing for hundreds of years to millions of souls, I would say, what God has caused to be put together let no man put assunder.

Let us see to it we use our Prayer Books properly.

Isaiah said: "This people draw near me with their mouth and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men."

See to it that when you pray the Prayer Book prayers you pray in the Holy Ghost.

See to it you make a right use of the Sacraments. God meant them to be to you a ceaseless blessing but you must never rely upon them for salvation; you are saved by grace through faith and that not of yourself; it is the gift of God. Thousands of baptized people have been lost. Hundreds of Communicants have never got their hearts right and will not be found in Heaven.

See to it that you do not let the Prayer Book become a prop, a book indispensable to your use in private prayer. When you kneel at your bedside pour out your heart to God in simple faith.

Finally, see to it that you are not afraid to defend your Prayer Book, whensoever it be necessary, nor to teach it to the children, but always put the Bible first.

Above all things, dear friend, see that you have personal dealing with God and your Saviour Jesus Christ, and having learnt the value of His precious blood you may enter into the Holiest place.

THE END

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